



## State of Montana Project Management Office

### *Project Delivery and Closure Phase*

## End of Delivery Phase Checklist

A checklist of activities and deliverables that should be completed by the end of the Delivery Phase. This checklist can be used during an end-of-phase management review. This is one of a series of end-of-phase checklists, one for each of our project phases.

The theme of an end-of-phase management review is to ensure that sufficient work has been completed in the current project phase to allow the project to enter the next phase without an unacceptable increase in project risk. Thus, the checklist is not only for what work was done in the last phase, but also for what foundation has been set for the work that is coming next. Projects that don't lay a good foundation in risk reduction activities such as planning, requirements management, design and testing, can become overextended in later project phases, increasing the schedule time, cost and risk of the project, and decreasing the fitness for use of the project's result. A checklist that tracks the status of key activities and deliverables in each project phase can help the team and stakeholders decide if a sufficient foundation has been laid in the current project phase to allow the project to continue into the next phase.

The Delivery Phase is the final phase of the project, during which delivery/deployment to customers or users will begin. Thus the phase checklist for Delivery is the final project review of successful completion and readiness for release to customers.

1. If you are at the beginning of your project, use the end-of-phase checklists to make the general plan for the entire project. If you are in mid-project, examine the checklists of previous phases to ensure that your project is not already overextended. Try to avoid examining these end-of-phase checklists late in the project phase or on the eve of the end-of-phase project review—they lose much of their value as a planning tool if they are not used early.
2. Don't be put off by the number of items on these checklists. They are illustrative of the areas of focus, with example checklist items underneath, for accomplishing the key goals of the phase. Edit these checklists to remove items that don't apply to your particular project and to include additional items that are key gating items in your organization's development or project process. You can also adapt these checklists to your organization's project lifecycle phases—more on that below. Try to do this editing early in your planning when you're not under pressure to complete a particular phase. Then hold the checklist steady both during and at the end of the phase; that is, resist making changes and removing items in order to have a better review.
3. Start actively using each checklist *early* in the project phase to ensure completeness of the activities and deliverables that you are trying to accomplish during the phase.

4. As part of the end-of-phase review, the checklist should be prepared with either a “YES” or “NO” in the “Done?” column. Items with a “NO” are “punch list” items to be tracked until completion.

## The Use of Project Phases

Projects are typically divided into phases that define logical divisions of the project work over time. Phases also provide the team and management with checkpoints for reviewing project progress and parameters, and determining whether to go further.

The project phase breakdown and names that we use are fairly typical, but by no means the only ones. If your project phases are broken up differently, you can adapt our end-of-phase checklists to your own development or project lifecycle methodology. For example, product development organizations might split the “Execution” phase into two distinct phases of “Design” and “Prototype and Test”. Organizations with complex manufacturing may want to have two phases for “Delivery”. Other industries may have completely different phases. The point here is that a project lifecycle should have periodic progress reviews where the work to date is examined and the risk of continuing with the project is assessed. Our end-of-phase checklists are meant to support these reviews.

To guide your use of this checklist and its possible adaptation to your own development model, the next section provides our definition of the Approval Phase.

## Delivery Phase

The keywords of the Delivery Phase are production, deployment and closeout. During this phase, volume manufacturing of a product is ramped up, implementation of a system is scaled up, deployment of software or a service is begun, and the development organization gradually decouples from the project as operations and support groups come up to speed. The cross-functional project team disbands and its members either return to functional duties or join a new cross-functional team.

Capturing the knowledge gained by team members during the project is a crucial activity during this phase. This opportunity is often overlooked and the knowledge remains locked away within individual team members. In each project we manage, we do some things right and others not so well, and we always learn a lot! How do we make these lessons stick? How can we capture these lessons learned so that others can benefit from our experience without paying the high experiential price that we paid? The Delivery Phase includes a “close-out” set of activities:

**Deployment Readiness and Release to Delivery** activities focus on judging the release-ready project deliverable according to the completion criteria set earlier, as well as formal mechanisms for releasing components, processes, documentation, etc., to a state where they are considered customer-ready and under maximum change control.

**Post-Delivery Monitoring and Feedback** activities focus on judging the results of initial customer deployments, handling issues that arise and ensuring that the project deliverables have been handed off successfully to those who will continue customer deployments and customer support.

**Project Closeout** activities focus on closing down the project in an orderly way, from smooth team member transitions, to archiving of documentation, to capturing of lessons learned from the team before they disband.

## Using the Delivery Phase Checklist

As we stated in the Introduction, the purpose of an end-of-phase checklist (and accompanying management review) is to ensure that sufficient work has been completed in the current project phase to allow the project to enter the next phase without an unacceptable increase in project risk. In the case of the Delivery Phase, we're now at the end of the project, so open items take on a new significance. Some absolutely cannot be left open, others are actually part of early ongoing monitoring of the product or system's performance in early use by users.

The contents of the Delivery Phase Checklist are thus designed to ensure that the project requirements have been satisfied and that the entire organization is ready to support the product/system/service throughout its lifetime. The critical aspects of the End of Delivery Phase Review are:

- Affirming that the project's deliverable is ready for release to customers.
- Ensuring in detail that all the cross-functional group's planning and preparation have culminated in the processes, tools, documentation, personnel training, etc., that are needed to support users and customers during and after release.

The checklist also includes items for smooth project closeout and reviews of initial customer results.

Some companies may do multiple Delivery Phase reviews, staging the product/system out to subsets of customers, monitoring results, then opening up release to a wider customer base.

If there is a Delivery Phase activity or deliverable that has not been completed by the final end-of-project review, the team and stakeholders may make a consensus decision that there is no severe risk in allowing the issue to be dealt with as part of ongoing support.

If this case can be made for the item, then enter a "NO" in the "Done?" column and enter the item's completion date in the "Due Date" column. This activity or deliverable is now considered to be on the "punch list," a to-do list of activities that the project manager recognizes as exceptional—a carefully controlled overextension of the project. These items must be carefully tracked to closure before the end-of-project review can be considered fully complete. The project manager takes an action item

from the end-of-project review to track each item on the punch list and report the closure of each item. The project manager may transition this responsibility to a responsible support person or product manager. Progress on the punch list should be reported regularly and frequently. The review is not considered complete until the punch list has been cleared.

## Administrative Information

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